



Language Arts: Writing

Free Half-Length Practice Test – FPT6



Language
English

Released
2016

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Language Arts – Writing

Directions – Part 1

Multiple-Choice Questions (MC)

**Time – 85 minutes (Part 1 and 2)
(MC and Essay Question)**

**25 MC Questions – Part 1
1 Essay Question – Part 2**

This is a test of some of the skills involved in revising written materials. There are three selections that present draft reports, letters, or articles. Each selection is presented twice, first in a box in a conventional format and then in a spread-out format with certain parts underlined and numbered. You will be asked to correct or improve the underlined and numbered parts. Read quickly through the boxed text to get an idea of its purpose and style. Then go on to the spread-out format.

For some of the underlined parts, there is no corresponding question in the right-hand column; instead just four alternatives are listed. Choose the alternative that

- makes the statement grammatically correct;
- expresses the idea in the clearest or most appropriate way;
- is worded most consistently with the style and purpose of the writing;
- organizes the ideas in the most effective way.

In some cases, there may be more than one problem to correct or improve. When you have decided which alternative is best, mark your choice on the answer sheet. If you think the original underlined version is best, choose “No change.”

Other underlined parts have questions about organization or spelling in the right-hand column. In questions about organization, you will probably find it helpful to look at the boxed text. In the questions about spelling, you are to indicate which of three underlined words is misspelled, if any. If there are no errors in any of the words, choose “None.”

Work as quickly as you can without becoming careless. Do not spend too much time on any question that is difficult for you to answer. Instead, skip it and return to it later if you have time. Try to answer every question even if you have to guess.

Mark all your answers on the answer sheet. Give only one answer to each question.

If you decide to change one of your answers, be sure to erase the first mark completely.

Be sure that the number of the question you are answering matches the number of the row of answer choices you are marking on your answer sheet. The answer sheet may contain more rows than you need.

You will have 85 minutes to complete Part 1 and Part 2 of the Writing test.

Questions 1 – 9 refer to the following selection.

A student is writing a letter to a school in Mexico to propose a cultural exchange program. Read through the draft. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow. There may be some errors in the draft you are not asked to revise.

Ridge View High School
1700 Ridge View Avenue
Tacoma, Washington 98409

Mr. Luis García, Principal
Preparatoria Morelos
Ignacio Mariscal 747
58001 MORELIA, MICH
MEXICO

Dear Mr. García —

¶1 Jeremy Hunt, who graduated from our high school last year, recently returned from Morelia, where he visited your school, as I guess you should already know. Last week he spoke to our school's International Club about his experiences. He described your school as being about the same sized as ours but having different courses and also he thought it would be a great idea for our schools to initiate an exchange program.

¶2 Since Jeremy's visit, we club members have been discussing different kinds of exchanges: a letter or newspaper exchange, a video exchange, or perhaps even a club trip. The trip idea was naturally very appealing, but we decided that it was impractical because of the expenses that would necessarily be involved. We have concluded that a video exchange would be the funnest. Students at each school could prepare a fifteen- or twenty-minute video about various aspects of their school. Some of our club members are quite proficient at making videos, and the project would be beneficial in helping us learn about our two schools' similarities and differences. Ms. Truong, our club advisor, is real excited over this idea. She is encouraging us writing you.

¶3 Should you have any questions, please direct them to Ms. Truong at the address given above. We look forward to hearing from you.

¶4 We hope your students will be as eager as we are to have a video exchange. Personally, I'm hoping to be a film major in college. Of course, we would welcome any other ideas for the getting of an exchange program going. We have enclosed a copy of our school newspaper to help you become acquainted with us.

Yours Truly,

Marcella Ramírez

Ridge View High School
1700 Ridge View Avenue
Tacoma, Washington 98409

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Preparatoria Morelos
Ignacio Mariscal 747
58001 MORELIA, MICH
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1 _____

- A. (No change)
- B. Dear Mr. García:
- C. Dear Sir —
- D. Dear Sir,

2 _____

- A. (No change)
- B. a fact you know.
- C. as I probably don't need to tell you.
- D. as you probably know.

3 _____

- A. (No change)
- B. schools International club
- C. schools International Club
- D. school's International club

4 _____

- A. (No change)
- B. courses. He
- C. courses, besides which he
- D. courses mentioning he

5 _____

- A. (No change)
- B. us club members have been discussing
- C. we all are as a club discussing
- D. our club have been discussing

and the project would be beneficial in helping us learn about our two schools' similarities and differences. Ms. Truong, our club advisor, is **6** real excited over this **7** idea. She is encouraging us writing you.

¶3 Should you have any questions, please direct them to Ms. Truong at the address given above. We look forward to hearing from you.

¶4 We hope your students will be as eager as we are to have a video exchange. Personally, I'm hoping to be a film major in college. Of course, we would welcome any other ideas for **8** the getting of an exchange program going. We have enclosed a copy of our school newspaper to help you become acquainted with us.

Yours Truly,

Marcella Ramírez

6

- A. (No change)
- B. really excited concerning
- C. enthusiastic about
- D. so enthusiastic over

7

- A. (No change)
- B. idea, encouraging us writing you.
- C. idea and has encouraged us to write you.
- D. idea. It was her that encouraged us to write.

8

- A. (No change)
- B. starting an exchange program.
- C. the starting up of an exchange program.
- D. how to get an exchange program going.

9

This question refers to the letter as a whole.

Which of the following changes, if any, would improve the organization of ideas in this letter?

- A. (No change; the organization of ideas in the letter is best as written.)
- B. (Make paragraph 3 the second paragraph of the letter.)
- C. (Make paragraph 3 the last paragraph of the letter.)
- D. (Omit paragraph 3 from the letter.)

NO TEST MATERIAL ON THIS PAGE

Questions 10 – 16 refer to the following selection.

Read through the following draft report. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow. There may be some errors in the draft you are not asked to revise.

The Calculus Wars

¶1 Mathematics may sometimes seem like an impersonal subject. Particularly with the most interesting mathematics, remembering that there were actual people behind it can be hard. In some sense, then, it had to be so, and there is often more to their stories than just numbers and equations. Sometimes stuff like this can be really hard to believe.

¶2 Sir Isaac Newton (1643 – 1727) is often considered the greatest scientist of all time. Defining laws of motion and universal gravitation up until the 20th century, he provided the framework for physics. He also made enormous contributions to optics (the science of light) and to mathematics. In mathematics, Newton invented calculus.

¶3 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716) was a German philosopher, who was a scientist, made inventions, a lawyer, and a mathematician. He has been called “the last man who knew everything.” His ideas have been said to anticipate some in contemporary geology, psychology, computer science, and information theory. He has been claimed as an originator of library science. In mathematics, Leibniz also invented calculus.

¶4 In this case, Newton and Leibniz, men who knew one another and were among the greatest geniuses in history, waged “the calculus wars.” Their tactics included name calling, publishing attacks on each other’s honesty, and allowing their allies to do more of the same. For example, Leibniz wrote an unsigned review of works by Newton and in the unsigned review which he wrote, Leibniz compared Newton to a known mathematical plagiarist. A few years later, the British Royal Society issued a report asserting that Leibniz had been dishonest in describing his work. Newton, the Society’s president, had secretly written the entire report. Mathematics is often said to be “timeless,” “eternal,” and “beautiful.” But mathematicians, even great ones, can never be timeless or eternal, and they may be far from beautiful as well.

The Calculus Wars

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12 Defining laws of motion and universal gravitation up until the 20th century, he provided the framework for physics. He also made enormous contributions to optics (the science of light) and to mathematics. In mathematics, Newton invented calculus.

10

- A. (No change)
- B. Yet they certainly did exist,
- C. As a result, this has to be true,
- D. Specifically, there always have been,

11

- A. (No change)
- B. I'm pretty sure that this is one of the truly best of them.
- C. Here's one that you shouldn't be surprised if you haven't heard of.
- D. (Delete this sentence; the essay is best without it.)

12

- A. (No change)
- B. Up until the 20th century, defining laws of motion and universal gravitation, he provided the framework for physics.
- C. By defining laws of motion and universal gravitation, he provided the framework for physics up until the 20th century.
- D. He provided the framework for physics, by defining laws of motion and universal gravitation up until the 20th century.

¶3 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716) was a German philosopher, **13** who was a scientist, made inventions, a lawyer, and a mathematician. He has been called “the last man who knew everything.” His ideas have been said to **14** anticipate some in **14** contemporary geology, psychology, computer science, and information theory. He has been claimed as an **14** originator of library science. In mathematics, Leibniz also invented calculus.

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- 13** _____
- A. (No change)
 - B. did science, inventing, law, and mathematics.
 - C. scientist, inventor, lawyer, and mathematician.
 - D. scientist, inventor, practiced law, and mathematics.

- 14** _____
- Which word is misspelled, if any?
- A. (None)
 - B. anticipate
 - C. contemporary
 - D. originator

- 15** _____
- The writer wants to add an introductory sentence to paragraph 4. Which of the following would be the best choice?
- A. Their approaches to calculus were somewhat different, and Leibniz developed notation that is still used today.
 - B. At around this time in Japan, Seki Takakazu (or Seki Kowa) was independently doing related work.
 - C. How common is it for contemporaries to separately make the same discovery or invention?
 - D. Are there any effects when two people invent the same thing at about the same time?

- 16** _____
- A. (No change)
 - B. in which there is a comparison by Leibniz of Newton
 - C. in which he is compared by him
 - D. in which he compared Newton

NO TEST MATERIAL ON THIS PAGE

Questions 17 – 25 refer to the following selection.

Read through the draft report. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow. There may be some errors in the draft you are not asked to revise.

Ray Harryhausen

¶1 Special effects in today’s movies rely on computer-generated imagery, but this is a relatively recent thing. For most of movie history, what appeared on screen had to exist in real life. One simple but painstaking technique used in older movies was “stop-motion animation,” in which a single photograph became one frame in a movie. To produce the illusion of movement, animators would take a series of photographs of three-dimensional miniature models, with tiny, progressive adjustments made to them by hand between the photos. It could take several individual frames to create just one second of film time, but when the frames ran at film speed, giant apes or dinosaurs came to life.

¶2 Ray Harryhausen was to become an industry leader in this technique.

¶3 Born in 1920, Harryhausen grew up in Los Angeles. At thirteen, he saw *King Kong*, one of the first two stop-motion movies and found his life’s work. “I haven’t been the same since,” he was quoted as saying on numerous occasions. Harryhausen decided to try stop-motion himself. With the help of his father, he built tiny movie sets in the family garage. He then congregated within them small, clay models of apes and dinosaurs and photographed them using a borrowed camera.

¶4 Living in Los Angeles, Harryhausen was able to meet Willis O’Brien, he had created the special effects on *King Kong*. After seeing the teenager’s models and pictures, O’Brien encouraged him and recommended classes in art, photography, and to learn anatomy. By the early 1940s, Harryhausen will do animation first at the Paramount film studio and then for the Army.

¶5 After the war, O’Brien hired Harryhausen to work on *Mighty Joe Young* another stop-motion movie about a giant ape. The film won an Oscar for best special effects, a success that allowed Harryhausen to make his own feature, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. It was a preposterous, low-budget film that exuberantly detailed a dinosaur’s annihilation of New York City, but it looked gorgeous, and audiences loved it.

¶6 Harryhausen made more monster movies, including *It Came From Beneath the Sea*. There were also fantasy, science-fiction, and mythology films such as *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, *The First Men in the Moon*, and *Clash of the Titans*. If a genre called for special effects, Harryhausen answered.

¶7 Harryhausen always strove to improve his special effects. Otherwise, he insisted that his miniature monsters share the screen with live actors. In *Jason and the Argonauts*, Harryhausen engineered a complex sword fight between groups of actors and stop-motion skeletons. Realistically combining the two was often a challenge; indeed, a single scene in one movie took him five months to film.

¶8 Harryhausen died in 2013, but his work is still worth checking out. It continues to inspire directors such as James Cameron, George Lucas, and Peter Jackson; Steven Spielberg even credits it for making both *Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park* possible. Harryhausen’s career was itself an incredible sight to behold. In one frame, he was a teenager experimenting in his garage; in the next, he was the biggest special-effects legend in movie history.

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17

The writer wants to use a more precise word here. Which choice would best accomplish her goal?

- A. style
- B. capability
- C. innovation
- D. occurrence

18

- A. (No change)
- B. located into the sets
- C. thronged them full of
- D. populated the sets with

¶4 Living in Los Angeles, Harryhausen was able to meet Willis O'Brien, **19** he had created the special effects on *King Kong*. After seeing the teenager's models and pictures, O'Brien encouraged him and recommended classes in art, photography, and **20** to learn anatomy. By the early 1940s, Harryhausen **21** will do animation first at the Paramount film studio and then for the Army. **22**

19

- A. (No change)
- B. having created
- C. being creator of
- D. who had created

20

- A. (No change)
- B. anatomy.
- C. taking anatomy.
- D. studying anatomy.

21

- A. (No change)
- B. was doing
- C. having done
- D. would have done

22

Choose the sentence to add at the end of paragraph 4 that would best fit with the ideas in that paragraph.

- A. During World War II he made humorous animated training films and worked alongside Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel.
- B. Harryhausen benefited greatly from the support of his parents, especially his father Frederick, a machinist and inventor.
- C. Harryhausen's groundbreaking movie work was honored in 1992 with a career Academy Award for technical achievement.
- D. In 2004, he published his autobiography, and in 2012 the documentary film *Ray Harryhausen: Special Effects Titan* was released.

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23

- A. (No change)
- B. *Mighty Joe Young*: another
- C. *Mighty Joe Young*; another
- D. *Mighty Joe Young*, another

24

- A. (No change)
- B. After all,
- C. In particular,
- D. On the one hand,

¶8 Harryhausen died in 2013, but his work is still worth checking out. It continues to inspire directors such as James Cameron, George Lucas, and Peter Jackson; Steven Spielberg even credits it for making both *Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park* possible. Harryhausen's career was itself an incredible sight to behold. In one frame, he was a teenager experimenting in his garage; in the next, he was the biggest special-effects legend in movie history.

25

This question concerns the report as a whole.

The writer wants to include dates with the movies, fact check the movie titles, and spell check the various directors' names. Which specialized reference source would best help her accomplish these goals?

- A. A database of popular magazine articles
- B. An archive of national newspaper content
- C. A film industry website devoted to film content
- D. A documentary about the entertainment business

Language Arts – Writing

Directions

Part 2

Time – 85 Minutes (Part 1 and Part 2)

25 Questions – Part 1

1 Essay Question – Part 2

This is a test of your writing skills. Your response will be scored based on:

- Development of a central position through explanation of supporting reasons, examples, and details from passages and personal experience
- Clear organization of ideas, including an introduction and conclusion, logical paragraphs, and effective transitions
- Language use, including varied word choice, varied sentence constructions, and appropriate voice
- Clarity and correctness of writing conventions

You will find two passages in which the authors put forth differing perspectives on an issue of importance. Read both passages carefully, noting the strengths and weaknesses of each discussion. Then, you will write an essay in which you explain your own opinion on the issue.

A high school advisor invited speakers to talk to students during the school’s annual Career Day. The following speeches were given to the juniors and seniors.

A College Education: The Key to Success

¶1 Thinking about the next step in your life can be a challenge. You can either go to college or start work right away. But these days, there isn’t really much choice. A college degree is not just important — it’s a necessity.

¶2 First, many careers require a college degree. For example, you can’t become a teacher, architect, or journalist without one. In fact, Georgetown University estimates that roughly 63% of all jobs will require some college education or degree by 2018. Furthermore, a 2013 government report states that only 3.7% of college graduates 25 and older were unemployed. But the unemployment rate for the same age group with only high school diplomas was 7.5%.

¶3 College graduates also earn more money than nongraduates. Data from 2013 show that people with a bachelor’s degree earn an average of \$30,000 more a year than those with just a high school diploma. More income can lead to a more secure lifestyle and an increased ability to put your children through college. It can also lead to a more fulfilling retirement.

¶4 But earning a degree isn’t just about making a living. It’s also about happiness. I’m a college graduate, and I love my job as a magazine editor. In fact, a 2010 report by the College Board states that 58% of college-educated people felt very satisfied with their jobs. However, only 50% of those with just a high school diploma reported the same.

¶5 Yes, college takes time and money. But it’s an investment in your future that will pay off in the long run. In fact, a survey conducted in 2011 found that 86% of college graduates believed the benefits of their education were worth the cost. Having a degree gives you more job security, financial independence, and personal satisfaction.

Learning a Trade: An Alternative Path to Success

¶1 A college degree is often presented as the best option after high school, but many college graduates find themselves in debt, out of work, and dependent on others. They may have to put off owning a car, buying a house, or saving for retirement. Instead, why not consider learning a trade? I'm a plumber, and I'm glad I'm not stuck in an office all day.

¶2 Trades, or middle-skill jobs, require some training in a specific skill, like real estate sales, personal training, and carpentry, but take less education than traditional bachelor's degrees. Learning to be a sheet metal worker may need just three months, while other trades, like electricians and healthcare aides, may require only one or two years of training.

¶3 Middle-skill jobs are crucial to society, but fewer people are doing them than in the past. As a result, our country now has a "skills gap," meaning there aren't enough people to perform this critical work. In 2011, a survey revealed that 67% of manufacturing companies had a serious shortage in skilled laborers, which increases the demand for trade workers. Furthermore, USA Today reported that almost 2.5 million new, middle-skill jobs will be added to the workforce by 2017. If that doesn't sound like job security, I don't know what does.

¶4 But what about money? First, government grants are available to help pay for the required training. In fact, the government dispensed \$2 billion over the last three years for trade education. Second, middle-skill jobs account for half of all jobs in the United States that pay middle-class wages, and some even pay more than jobs that require college degrees.

¶5 Four years of college isn't your only option. You may find that learning a trade is perfect for you. You could start earning more money, more quickly, and without incurring so much debt.

Write an essay in which you explain your own position on the issue of whether or not the time used in learning a trade for career development is as valuable as the time invested in a college degree.

Be sure to use evidence from the text passages provided as well as specific reasons and examples from your own experience and knowledge to support your position. Remember that every position exists within the context of a larger discussion of the issue, so your essay should, at minimum, acknowledge alternate and/or opposing ideas. When you have finished your essay, review your writing to check for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.



NO TEST MATERIAL ON THIS PAGE

Answer Key

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
1	B	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
2	D	II. Language Facility	Medium
3	A	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
4	B	II. Language Facility	Easy
5	A	III. Writing Conventions	Easy
6	C	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
7	C	III. Writing Conventions	Easy
8	B	II. Language Facility	Easy
9	C	I. Organization of Ideas	Medium
10	B	I. Organization of Ideas	Medium
11	D	I. Organization of Ideas	Easy
12	C	II. Language Facility	Medium
13	C	II. Language Facility	Easy
14	A	III. Writing Conventions	Easy
15	D	I. Organization of Ideas	Medium
16	D	II. Language Facility	Medium
17	C	II. Language Facility	Medium
18	D	II. Language Facility	Medium
19	D	III. Writing Conventions	Easy
20	B	II. Language Facility	Medium
21	B	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
22	A	I. Organization of Ideas	Medium
23	D	II. Language Facility	Medium
24	C	I. Organization of Ideas	Hard
25	C	III. Writing Conventions	Medium

Part 2

Scoring Your Essay

The Scoring Guide used for scoring essay responses is given below. One way to see how well you did on your essay in this practice test is to ask someone with experience in scoring essays to score your response using this scoring guide. We also provide sample responses to the practice prompt that have been scored by trained essay raters. You can compare your essay to these scored responses and estimate your score that way.

Please remember that you must achieve a score of at least 2 on the essay portion of the Language Arts – Writing test in order to pass the test as a whole.

Scoring Guide

Score of 1 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate weak command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*

- The response has little or no development of a central position or claim(s). No correct and/or understandable context of the topic is provided for the discussion. The writer’s own position on the issue or claim(s) may not be clear. A few ideas may be provided but these lack explanation of ideas, only repeat ideas, or ideas are derived entirely from provided texts.
- The response lacks an introduction and/or conclusion, and fails to demonstrate any understanding of paragraphing. Transitions are not used or may be used incorrectly.
- Language control is minimal. Word choice and sentence structure are simple. The response lacks formal style and an objective tone.
- Minimal or no command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling frequently appear.

Score of 2 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate limited command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*

- The response demonstrates limited development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic that is only somewhat correct or understandable is provided for the discussion. The writer’s own position on the issue or claim(s) may be somewhat unclear or confusing. A few ideas are provided but explanation is thin and/or superficial and parts of the explanation may be repetitious or derived too heavily from provided texts without interpretation.
- The introduction and conclusion are minimally developed. Some related ideas are grouped together though paragraphing may not be used. Few transitions are used.
- Beginning skill in language is demonstrated. Word choice is general and repetitive. The response has repetitive sentence structure and/or long, uncontrolled sentences. The response lacks formal style and/or an objective tone.
- Limited command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Numerous errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appear and may interfere with understanding.

Scoring Guide Continued

Score of 3 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate partial command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*

- The response demonstrates partial development of a central position or claim(s). A brief context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including introduction of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer’s own position on the issue or claim(s) is evident. Several ideas with limited or uneven explanation are provided; few or only general examples and/or details support ideas. The response uses evidence drawn from provided texts but this is limited or overused, poorly chosen, or misrepresented.
- The response has an introduction and conclusion, though one or both of these may be under-developed. Ideas are grouped together in paragraphs, though the relationship among ideas may at times be unclear. Transitions are simple and used inconsistently.
- Some developing skill in language is demonstrated. Word choice is general and the response demonstrates a little variety in sentence structure, although a few long, uncontrolled sentences may be used. The response attempts to maintain formal style and an objective tone but may fail to sustain these throughout discussion.
- Partial command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are regularly present throughout the response and may sometimes interfere with understanding.

Score of 4 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate adequate command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*

- The response demonstrates adequate development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including some discussion of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer’s own position on the issue or claim(s) is clear. Several ideas with adequate explanation are provided; some specific and relevant examples and/or details support ideas, including relevant evidence drawn selectively from provided texts and appropriately integrated.
- A clear, functional introduction and conclusion are provided. Relationships between ideas are clarified by organization: transitions are consistently used, though they may be simple, and some evidence of logical sequencing of ideas is demonstrated. The response uses appropriate paragraphing.
- Adequate skill in language use is demonstrated. Word choice is mostly specific and somewhat varied. The response demonstrates control of sentences with some variety in length and structure. A formal style is established and an objective tone maintained throughout the discussion.
- Adequate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Some errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appear but do not interfere with understanding.

Scoring Guide Continued

Score of 5 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate strong command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*

- The response demonstrates competent development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including balanced discussion of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer’s own position on the issue or claim(s) is clear and considered. Several ideas with complete explanation are provided; specific, relevant, and somewhat elaborated reasons, examples, and/or details support ideas, including clear and relevant evidence drawn from provided texts and skillfully integrated.
- The introduction and conclusion are clear and sufficient. Clear and appropriate paragraphing is used. Varied transitions and logical sequencing of ideas are used throughout to link major sections of text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between ideas.
- The response demonstrates competent skill in language. Word choice is usually precise and varied. The response uses well-controlled sentences that are varied in length and complexity. A formal style is established and an objective tone maintained throughout; counterclaims are discussed fairly, without bias.
- Able command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Few errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appear, and most are superficial.

Score of 6 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate superior command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*

- The response demonstrates expert development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including balanced discussion of the strengths and limitations of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer’s own position on the issue or claim(s) is clear, considered, and nuanced. Several ideas with effective and thorough explanation are provided; relevant and fully elaborated reasons, examples, and/or details support ideas, including compelling evidence drawn from provided texts and effectively integrated.
- The response has an effective introduction and conclusion. Clear and appropriate paragraphing is used, creating a coherent whole. Effective transitions and logical sequencing of ideas are used throughout to link major sections of text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claims(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- The response demonstrates proficient skill in language. Word choice is precise, varied, and engaging. The response effectively varies sentence length and complexity. A formal style is established and an objective tone that enhances the effectiveness of the response maintained; counterclaims are discussed fairly, without bias.
- Expert command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated, and the response demonstrates sophisticated use of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Few or no errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appear.

Scored Sample Responses

Note: All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

Score of 1

I will go to a trad shcool cause I want to mak munny now "\$2 billon over the last 3 yers" trad shcool you can gradat faster and not be "stuck in an office all day" and lern a job its like colege but chepper i wanna be a carpentry or plumber or elctrion

Score of 2

Trade school is a way to get a job quick and cheap. They can teach you what you want to do with out any delay's in learning you can fill the "skills gap" and have a smaller education and still have a degree for maybe electrical or carpentry. "Learning to be a sheet metal worker may need just three months, while other trades, like electricitians and healthcare aides, may require only one or two years of training." So its fast. "First, government grants are available to help pay." For it so there cheap.

Score of 3

I think a college degree is more important then learning a trade, but some people cant wait to start earning money now, their poor and they can only go to a trade school so a trade school is graet if you can get a goverment grant. "Government grants are available to help pay for the required training." But even if you pay for it, its still cheaper then going to college.

Also good about a trade school is that you get out faster, you can get like a diploma or andorsment and be okay to do that job. It will not take four years to get a diploma but maybe two years or months. "Learning to be a sheet metal worker may need just three months."

"The demand for trade workers" is important. "USA Today reported that almost 2.5 millon new, middle skill jobs will be added to the work force by 2017. If that does'nt sound like job security, I don't know what does."

In conclusion, going to a trade school is mostly best.

Score of 4

Preparing for a proffesion can be done through fast, specialized training. For other jobs, a college education may be necessary. But which one is more valuable? It really depends on you!

Some jobs need just a trade school education, where students learn about certain "middle-skill jobs." Some proffesions "need just three months" while others "may require only one or two years of training" (still less than college). Trade schools are cheaper than colleges, plus scholerships are available. "In fact, the government dispensed \$2 billion over the last three years for trade education." There is big demand for middle-skill jobs with "almost 2.5 million new" jobs adding to the workforce in the next few years.

An expensive way is 4 years with a college degree, "the best option after high school." Almost everyone (86%) believes their education was "worth the cost." Compared to high school graduates, college graduates have lower unemployment (3.7% to 7.5%), higher job satisfaction (58% to 50%), and higher annual incomes ("an average of \$30,000").

With those numbers, a college education is probably the best way to prepare for any career, but if you know what you want, you may be happy to know a trade school can get you there faster and cheaper.

Scored Sample Responses Continued

Score of 5

The plumber said that a “college degree is often presented as the best option after high school,” and the magazine editor called college education “The Key to Success.” I think they’re only half right. Even though I don’t know yet what I want to do after I get my diploma, I’m going to choose a compromise: community college.

Almost always, it is much less expensive than a four-year university, and it still offers the required introductory “survey” courses for freshman and sophomores (easily transferrable). It will expose me to fascinating topics for the first time. The formal education I will receive shows employers that I am qualified for many different jobs and can succeed in learning new things after high school. Because community colleges are smaller, the social opportunities are fewer and less extensive than experiences in universities, but I’m still going to be exposed to different conversations, ideas, and populations. In two years, I’ll likely be pointed in a direction that will keep me happily employed like the editor. At the very least, I will become a more qualified and interesting employee, and if I like community college, I can continue to a university to get more education and more potential earnings than “those with just a high school diploma!”

Trade schools don’t really allow for networking with others because they’re so focussed on their specialized programs. In a rush-rush-rush to get a degree, students might miss out on opportunities to find other professions interesting to them. Young adults need to take their time in figuring out how best to live out their long lives, and a college experience, even half of one, does just that. According to the editor, “86% of college graduates believed the benefits of their education were worth the cost.” And that kind of investment is priceless.

Score of 6

Because I know what I want to do with my life, career training for me is a better bet than spending my time and money on a college degree.

To insure the doctor’s office is reimbursed quickly and correctly by insurance, the details of a physician’s procedures and practices are documented on forms. With over 9800 codes to learn and changes to them every year, a trade school can get me on the fast track to the necessary “training in a specific skill.” I’m interested in becoming what is known as a medical coder because I like computers and numbers.

Like the plumber in the speech, I can “start earning more money, more quickly” than a four-year (or even a five-year!) college graduate “without incurring so much debt.” The cost of a trade school is much cheaper than tuition at a university. Also, medical coding is a middle-skill job, accounting “for half of all jobs in the United States.” Since *USA Today* reported “almost 2.5 million new, middle-skilled jobs will be added to the workforce” in the next few years, it appears that I can have job security probably almost anywhere I want to live!

I understand the importance of college; some professions respect a formal education, and students who like to learn or don’t know about their futures can get ideas. Colleges offer a broad knowledge base, but they often make students learn unimportant things. There’s also a lot of socializing, introducing you to different people and cultures, but that can be distracting when you’re trying to focus on your education. A formal education costs so much more than trade school certification, but the rewards are similar: you can still earn more “than those with just a high school diploma,” but that’s no guarantee, since some graduates “find themselves in debt, out of work, and dependent on others.”

I took my time to decide on what I finally wanted to do with my life, and the options before me are clear: focusing on the trade is better than going to college because I can start the education toward my certification more quickly and more cheaply.

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